And I am preſt vnto it, therefore ſpeake.

Baſſ. In *Belmont* is a Lady richly left,
An d ſhe is faire, and fairer then that word,
Of wondrous vertues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receiue faire ſpeechleſſe meſſages:
Her name is *Portia*; nothing vnder-valew'd
To *Catos* daughter, *Brutus Portia*.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the foure winds blow in from euery coaſt
Renowned ſutors, and her ſunny lockes
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
which makes her ſeat of *Belmont*, *Colchos* ſtrond,
And many *Iaſons* comes in queſt of her.
O my *Anthonio*, had I but the meanes
To hold a riuall place with one of them,
I haue a minde preſages me ſuch thrift,
That I ſhould queſtionleſſe be fortunate.

Ant. Thou knowſt that all my fortunes are at ſea,
Neither haue I money, nor commodity,
To raiſe a preſent ſumme. Therefore go forth,
Try what my credit can in Venice do,
That ſhall be rackt euen to the vttermoſt,
To furniſh thee to *Belmont* to faire *Portia*.
Go preſently enquire, and ſo will I
where money is, and I no queſtion make,
To haue it of my truſt, or for my ſake. *Exeunt*

Enter Portia with her waiting Woman Nerriſſa.

Portia. By my troth *Nerriſſa*, my little body is a wearie of this great world.

Ner. You would be ſweet Madam, if your miſeries were in the ſame abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet for ought I ſee, they are as ſick that ſurfet with too much, as they that ſtarue with nothing; it is no meane happineſſe therefore to be ſeated in the meane, ſuperfluity comes ſooner by white haires, but competency liues longer.

Por.

Portia. Good ſentences, and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do, were as eaſie as to know what were good to do, Chappels had beene Churches, and poore mens cottages, Princes Pallaces; it is a good diuine that followes his owne inſtructions: I can eaſier teach twenty what were good to bee done, then to be one of the twenty to follow mine owne teaching: the braine may deuiſe lawes for the blood, but a hot temper leapes ore a colde decree, ſuch a hare is madneſſe the youth, to skip ore the meſhes of good counſell the cripple; but this reaſoning is not in the faſhion to chooſe me a husband; O me, the word chooſe, I may neyther chooſe who I would, nor refuſe who I diſlike, ſo is the will of a liuing daughter curbd by the will of a dead father: is it not hard *Neriſſa*, that I cannot chooſe one, nor refuſe none.

Ner. Your father was euer vertuous, and holy men at their death haue good inſpirations, therefore the lottry that he hath deuiſed in theſe three cheſts of gold, ſiluer, and leade, whereof who chooſes his meaning chooſes you, no doubt you wil neuer be choſen by any rightly, but one who ſhall rightly loue: But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of theſe Princely ſuters that are already come?

Por. I prethee ouer-name them, and as thou nameſt them, I will deſcribe them, and according to my deſcription, leuell at my affection.

Ner. Firſt, there is the Neapolitane Prince.

Por. I that's a colt indeed, for hee doth nothing but talke of his horſe, and he makes it a great appropriation vnto his owne good parts, that he can ſhoo himſelfe: I am much afeard my Lady his Mother plaid falſe with a ſmith.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frowne (as who ſhould ſay, if you will not haue me, chooſe; he heares merry tales and ſmiles not, I feare he will proue the weeping Philoſopher whē he growes old, being ſo full of vnmannerly ſadneſſe in his youth.) I had rather be married to a deaths head with a bone in his mouth, then